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KNOWLEDGE AND PERCEPTION OF NURSES ON NURSING RESEARCH: A STUDY OF STATE SPECIALISTS HOSPITAL, MAIDUGURI, BORNO STATE

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Abstract

The study was focused on knowledge and perception of nurses on nursing research using State Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri Borno State as a model. Research has become an important aspect of the nursing profession in its effort to upgrade and maintain the quality of practice among practitioners. For any profession to grow and develop, it must enhance knowledge. With current advances in building up a body of knowledge for nursing, research had become a major focus in nursing education and practice. It is a concept that has been incorporated into the nursing curricula at all levels of nursing education in Nigeria.

Key words: Knowledge, Perception, Nursing, and Nurses

Introduction

Many, but not all, nurses are aware of the need for, the usefulness of and the applicability of research in nursing. Many nurses are also frightened when they hear the word RESEARCH and want run away thinking this is for those people in their 'Ivory towers'. Nurses do conduct different types of research in nursing and allied field either alone or with colleagues in other fields such as sociology, anthropology.

The role of research in the advancement of knowledge cannot be over emphasized. It is 'sine qua non' to a growing profession like nursing, where there is a crying need for deepening and diversification. Phenomenal progress has been made in the fields of medicine, industry, technology, pure and applied sciences as a result of constant application of research experience to practical work. In these fields, decadence and traditionalism have yielded place to creativity.

Research has become an important aspect of the nursing profession to grow and develop, it must enhance

knowledge. It has been ascertained that research is the surest way of discovery and improving knowledge.

Research has been described as a process as well as an outcome. It is a process because it provides a way of thinking and an outcome because it allows understanding of relationship between events, situation or facts (1). There are many misconceptions about research. The word itself conjures vision of complicated tables and lists of statistical findings. The general impression that researches an elaborate educational preparation and a lifestyle of a recluse does not help matters.

These might have caused the dismal lack of interest for research among nurses. The fact is many nurses actually carry out research daily in their practice without realizing it. However, these are uncoordinated and disorganized. Many nurses do lack the minimal preparation required for carrying out a study and those who have the preparation may not have the required funding to finance the study.

Nursing is one of the health professions. A profession is "a cohesive and autonomous body of trained persons who perform work for the benefit of the public on the basis of

applied scientific knowledge” (2). One of the characteristics of the profession, as identified by Adegroye (3) is possession of a unique body of knowledge which is constantly seek to extend in order to improve service to the community (i.e. research). One characteristic which nursing in Nigeria is having difficulty in fulfilling is RESEARCH.

If the quality of nursing must be improved, research into all facets of nursing is imperative. In view of the above the researcher shall explore the level of knowledge of nurses on research and also look at how it is being perceived by them using state Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri as a model.

Statement of the Problem

In Africa today, effort are geared towards creating much awareness in changing nurse’s attitude to nursing research. This is the 20th century; a lot needs to be done. We should by now be nurse’s clinicians and nurses researchers Nursing research has gone through a rigorous process in other parts of the World.

Incorporating nursing research into Nigerian Nursing curricula poses a great need for studying nurse’s perception and knowledge about nursing research. Despite this some nurses still show a lot of ignorance about nursing research and ask question such as what is nursing research? How or who conducts nursing research? The purpose in this research is to study the knowledge and perception of nurses on nursing research.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to:-

- i) stimulate an awareness for the need for studies in nursing for improvement of patient care;
- ii) identify roles that nurses in the community can play in nursing research;
- iii) discuss priorities for nursing research; and
- iv) investigate ways of studying health and nursing needs.

Literature Review

There is little or non-information from literature as to the knowledge and perception of nurses on nursing research, however, in a similar study Filani concluded that those in the category of student nurse to matron level probably lack adequate skill in conducting actual research studies as evidenced by the findings. She said these findings indicates that there is need for research awareness and a need for developing skills in research among practicing nurses, especially among the very senior personal in positions of influence.

Aina reported that many nurses do lack the minimal preparation required for carrying out a study and those who have the preparation may not have required funding to finance the study. Many times nurses interested in research may not have incentives from their employers.

Moreover, in this country at least, nurses are not considered to be sufficiently educated to understand the rudiments of research methodology much less participate or conduct research. Incidentally, this observation is largely true but nurses are capable of learning.

On perception, Aina stated that there are many misconceptions about research. The word itself conjures visions of complicated tables and lists of statistical findings. The general impression that research requires an elaborate educational preparation and a lifestyle of a recluse does not help matters.

According to Beckingham many nurses are frightened when they hear the word research and to run away thinking this is for those people in their ‘ivory towers’. In the same vein, Filani said the term research to most people (especially nurses) immediately conjures an image of a course which is too complex in nature.

In Africa, Nigeria in particular, real awareness of Nursing Research came into being when the first degree, awarding program of nursing stated at the University of Ibadan in the Department of Nursing in 1965. In this Department, students were exposed to practical approach of carrying out research as well as how to develop, write and critique research results.

Before then, according to Olade nurses were mostly seen collecting data for medical research. In fact some nurses by then saw no reason why they should conduct or carry out research on their own. Their attitudes towards research were negative. The comment of Sterling and Owens about those attitudes which have blocked the participation of nurses in clinical research also confirmed these. These attitudes include: time consuming aspect of research, feelings of being inadequately prepared to identify researchable problems, feeling of lack of self confidence in conducting research and lack of administrative support.

In the same vein, Aina reported that in the West African Sub-region lack of fund, facilities and appropriate climate were largely responsible for the slow progress of nursing research. Other factors as identified by various authors on research include educational preparation of nurses and predominance of women in the nursing profession.

Larson reported that interest in nursing research has, probably for the first time, been expressed by the entire scientific community as a result of approval in 1983 of a House of Representatives bill proposing an Institute of Nursing within the National Institute of Health (NIH). Regardless of the pros and cons of a categorical institute, nursing research will be benefited by such attention.

In 1981, the American Nurses Association had this to say about the status of nursing research: "Recent years have seen a growing awareness among the public that valuable resource are finite and their use must be carefully considered. In this context, increasing attention is being given to the relative cost various strategies of utilizing health care resources to meet the present and emerging needs of the nation. Concurrently, nurses are assuming increased decision-making responsibility for the delivery of health care, and they can be expected to continue to assume greater responsibility in the future".

Although, there are over 4,000 nurses in the United States with doctoral degrees, many are discouraged from choosing research careers because they are at a disadvantage when competing for research funds.

The Journal of Nursing Research in its editorial stated that many of the nurses today who are truly qualified to

conduct research projects are filling administrative positions in educational institutions. For the most parts they have the preparation for both their present position and research but not the time for both. They are excellent administrators and are needed in their present position. While it is clear that there is a high degree of consensus among members of the nursing profession regarding the values of research into nursing, it is not always so clear to the persons closely associated with nursing research that the most fruitful or significant lines of development should be from the standpoint of making some real contribution to improvement of nursing care.

According to Notter some institutions now employ research consultants whose function is to stimulate and guide nurses in the conduct of such studies. This small, less sophisticated studies, which have been called 'research with a small r', will be done by many nurses with only elementary skills in research.

In addition, many young practitioners are beginning to be interested in doing research themselves and are seeking help in developing the skills required to carry out simple but carefully designed studies in the clinical setting. Nevertheless, he believe that many nurses are indeed interested in learning some basic facts about research, about how to evaluate its usefulness for them, and about how they can become participants in nursing research.

Methodology

The study area is the State Specialist Hospital, Maiduguri, Borno State. The hospital is the state's own largest hospital located at the heart of the metropolis. It is adjacent to the post office along Baga road.

The hospital was established in 1950 as a dispensary then later upgraded to a General Hospital. It got the status of a specialist hospital in 1989 when it is used by University of Maiduguri Teaching Hospital as a clinical teaching center coupled with other schools located in the hospital viz:- School of Nursing, Midwifery and Health Technology. It is therefore a training center for Nurses, Midwives, and Medical Students from college of Medicine, University of Maiduguri as well as Medical Laboratory Students.

It has eleven wards with about four hundred (400) beds capacity of manned by about five hundred nurses, ninety doctors among which are nine consultants. State Specialist Hospital attends to patients from Borno, Yobe, Adamawa, and other neighboring countries such as Cameroon, Niger and Chad because of its easy accessibility and low cost of medical services as it is a government owned hospital as compared to other hospitals around.

The research design for this study is a descriptive survey which solely relies on the data collected from the nurses. Descriptive survey describes data as they are. In a survey the researcher is interested in observing what is happening to sample subjects or variables without any attempt to control or manipulate them. It was chosen for the study because it seeks to describe the level of knowledge and perception of nurses on nursing research.

The target population for the study is the entire nurses of the State Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri. It includes nurses from the rank of staff nurse to Chief Nursing Officer. The sample used is one hundred nurses in the State Specialists Hospital which cuts across all the cadres of nurses. Simple random sampling method is used for selecting the sample for the study.

A questionnaire was designed for data collection. The questionnaire is divided into three parts viz:- Introduction, demographic data and Searching questions. The

questionnaire consists of twenty nine items which has been validated by the supervisor. The questionnaire was pretested using students of the Federal Training Center for Teachers of Health Sciences, Ibadan. The questionnaire was administered to one hundred nurses which is the sample for the study. Out of the questionnaire administered eighty six questionnaires were retrieved.

The analysis was based on the eighty six (86) questionnaires received from which inference will be made and conclusions derived. Before administering the questionnaire on the nurses, permission was sought from the Chief Nursing Officer in charge of the hospital who communicated to the Matrons, in charge of the wards. Descriptive statistics would be used for the data analysis that is the information was presented in tables and figures for analysis.

Results and Discussion

The information collected from questionnaire were presented in form of tables and figures. The concern of the study was to look at the knowledge and perception of nurses on nursing research using State Specialists Hospital, Maiduguri as a model. To answer the research questions the analysis was made as thus:-

Table 1: Characteristics of the Respondents

Variables	Characteristics	Percentage
Age	20-30 years	51.2
	31-40 years	41.9
	41- 50 years	5.8
	51-60 years	1.2
Sex	Male	44.2
	Female	55.8
Professional qualification	RN	33.7
	RN/RM	48.8
	Diploma	22.1
	B.Sc.	1.2
	Others	0
Rank	NO I	30.2
	NO II	26.7
	SNO	26.7
	PNO	9.3
	ACNO	3.5
	CNO	3.5

Table 2:- Exposure to Nursing Research

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	63	73.3
No	23	26.8
Total	86	100

Table 3:- Sources of knowledge

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Basic Nursing Education	13	15.1
Post Basic Course	19	22.1
Diploma Programme	13	15.1
Seminar/Workshop	39	45.3
Others	2	2.3
Total	86	100

Table 4:- Research requires elaborate educational preparation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agreed	26	30.2
Agreed	42	48.8
Undecided	13	15.1
Disagree	5	5.8
Strongly disagreed	0	0
Total	86	100

Table 5:- Need for research

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	82	95.3
No	4	4.7
Total	86	100

Table 6:- Willingness to conduct research

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	74	86.0
No	12	14.0
Total	86	100

Table 7:- Need for teaching nursing research at all levels of nursing education

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	85	98.8
No	1	1.2
Total	86	100

Table 8:- Opportunity for research in the clinical setting

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Strongly agree	23	26.8
Agree	46	53.2
Undecided	12	14.0

Disagree	3	3.5
Strongly disagree	2	2.5
Total	86	100

Table 9:- Nursing research develops nursing profession

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	83	96.5
No	3	3.5
Total	86	100

Discussion

One of the interesting findings is that a large percentage of nurses (73%) have been exposed to nursing research either as a basic nursing education, post basic course or through seminars and workshops. This is in agreement with the editorial of the journal of Nursing Research which stated that many of the nurses today are truly qualified to conduct research projects.

Allied to this point is that nurse's belief that research requires elaborate educational preparation. In the study 80% of the respondents agreed that research needs extensive educational preparation. This is contrary to belief held by Aina.

The perception of nurses towards research is very positive because of the research subject expressed the need for research in nursing. This is also contrary to study conducted by Bostrom, Malnight, Mac Doughall and Harja which revealed that staff nurses attitude toward nursing research in Britain was negative. And also is disagreement with the comment of Sterling and Owens about those attitudes which have blocked the participation of nurses in clinical research. It is also interesting to note that a large percentage of nurses, that is 86% are willing to conduct research if given the opportunity. However, their constraints is funding which is in agreement with Aina that lack of fund, facilities and appropriate climate were largely responsible for the slow progress of nursing research. The report by Larson that although there are over 4,000 nurses in the United States with doctoral degrees, many are discouraged from choosing research funds also confirmed this.

Though at this stage research education should have been in the curricula at all levels of nursing education but this is not obtainable as seen in the study. This can be attributed to the late awareness of research in nursing as reported by Laoye that real awareness of nursing research came into being when the first degree, awarding program of Nursing started at the University of Ibadan in the Department of Nursing in 1965.

On the question can research be utilized as a tool for improving nursing care, the findings in the study was affirmative? It was unanimously agreed that research is an inevitable tool for better patient care in nursing as reported by Marthan that the strength of this approach (problem-solving approach) lies in its ability to promote high quality patient care. And also Gortner (1974) has pointed out that the quality of nursing care cannot be improved until scientific accountability becomes as much as part of nursing's tradition as humanitarian is. She notes that scientific accountability is essential for the teacher in dealing with students, for the nurse practitioner dealing with clients or patients and for the nurse administrator with clients, patients or professionals in the health care delivery systems.

On opportunities for research in the clinical setting, about 80% of the respondents agreed that there are opportunities for research in the clinical setting as observed by Diers, Leonard and Filani that clinical research help to provide evidence for change. Henderson went ahead to suggest three definitive areas as scope for improving nursing practice, design of nursing equipment and evaluation or measurement of results of nursing practice.

It is worthy of note that the result of the study indicates that nursing research helps the profession in meeting the need of the society. As asserted by Filani that in order to improve the quality of care to our consumers (clients) research is a necessary.

On hindrances to research in nursing eighty percent of the respondents attributed to lack of funding similar to report by Aina and Larson. By and large the study answered all the research questions positively. That is nurses have knowledge on nursing research, their perception is positive towards research and that research and that research can be utilized as a tool for improving nursing care. However, what the study did not prove is the depth of knowledge of the respondents on nursing research this is because it was the focus of the researcher thus there is need to quantify the knowledge of nurses on nursing research in a replicated study.

Nursing needs teachers and practitioners who are creative and are research minded. This will have to start in the Schools of Nursing preparing students to use a problem-solving approach to learn nursing content and encouraging them to raise questions about the materials they learn. Upon graduation, these students will be better prepared intellectually and psychologically to contribute to research to further their education in nursing research.

Conclusion

In conclusion, research-mindedness is a must in the nursing profession. Nurses need to involve in research activities such as principles underlying nursing practice, nursing functions will include the technical role and the independent functions-that is , diagnosis of nursing action, the giving of care, and when desirable, the delegation of certain tasks to others and the appraisal of the outcome of nursing. There is the need to involve interdisciplinary research to determine what duties should be transferred in the best interest of the consumer's health care. Nurses who comprise the largest group of health workers should share in the study of how this can be done. Research is needed in nursing education, nursing administration and nursing practice.

The role of the nurse in research includes appreciating, initiating, undertaking, collaborating and evaluating research and studies for improvement of nursing education, nursing administration and nursing care.

Research is necessary as a functional specially. Every nurse has some potential to contribute to research in nursing. All of us must concert our efforts to develop research-mindedness in the nursing profession in this country. Furthermore nurses need to utilize research to discover and develop valid means of measuring the extent to which nursing actions attain their goals. Quality patient care must be constant goal of the nursing profession. The very nature of professionalism mandates constant evaluation and re-evaluation of the practice in the light of new knowledge and social change. This is part of the challenge and excitement of being a member of a profession.

Merton, a famous sociologist, shares this view by stating that; "we must recognize that a profession is committed to the task of enlarging it applies to the problems and troubles with which it deals. A profession not rooted in systematic knowledge is a self-contradiction, myth than a reality".

This statement is as valid for nursing us for any other profession. It is only through research that a systematic improvement in nursing care can be achieved; then the nursing profession can be proved of its contribution to the welfare of the people.

As professionals, nurses must learn something about scientific methods of looking into problems, learn to look analytically at events and working methods with which they are concerned. They must learn to read and evaluate reports of research carried out by others in order to apply the findings intelligently to their own solutions. Nurses are the best people to study their own problems.

Our role must now be perceived more specifically in terms of our involvement in patient care research. This is as it should be if nurses are to learn to take their proper place as productive research workers in our rapidly developing profession.

Finally, it is the researcher's hope and believe that this study had achieved its aim and a pace setter in the field². of study into nursing research in this milieu.

It is the researchers' opinion that the following recommendations will be of utmost relevance in improving on Nursing Research.

1. Nurses should participate in research studies by organizing themselves into groups and with the help of a nurse researcher they plan, implement and evaluate research studies of their interest.

Professional organization of nurses should concern itself with research in nursing with the ultimate aims of improvement of patients care and upgrading of the³. professional status of its members.

This can be done by- Seeking funds for research in nursing Organizing or sponsoring conference, workshop etc to encourage research and research training. Providing media for communicating research studies- for example, a Nursing Research Journal. Financial support for research in nursing should be developed on a long term basis and not as a temporary measure. Research in Nursing should be concentrated in basic and applied areas of nursing practice and the outcomes of nursing intervention.

Maximum involvement of nurses at all levels. This is essentials to the acceptance of conclusions and recommendations derived from the research. Stimulate active participation by nursing personnel in interdisciplinary research directed towards improvement of the delivery of health services. Nurses must learn to anticipate and identify problems before they can be solved. To be mindful that the ethics of nursing research be consistent with the ethics of nursing practice. Since nursing research involves human subjects directly and indirectly, its activities must be guided by certain ethical considerations.

4. Research methodology should be included in the curricula at all levels of nursing education. Establishment of Nursing Research Unit especially at the Ministry of Health and such centers should be manned by a team of research nurses. The standard of basic nursing education should be graded to at least a Higher National Diploma where research can be carried out conveniently. All nurses most especially nurse educators be oriented in nursing research through workshops and seminars. Lastly, this study should be replicated most probably on a larger scale and a comparative analysis made.

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